

MESSAGE OF ISLAM

A LECTURE GIVEN TO THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY IN VARIOUS PLACES
IN SOUTH AFRICA
(1926)

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PUBLISHED BY
THE TRUST FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND
CIRCULATION OF MUSLIM RELIGIOUS
LITERATURE
"THE ISLAMIC REVIEW" OFFICE
THE MOSQUE, WOKING

PREFACE

My lecture tour in South Africa has opened up a new vista of hope for the establishment of the Truth. It was a happy coincidence that Lord Headley and myself reached the country at the moment when the slanders against Islam, engineered by certain of the well-known "traders in religion," had come to a head.

Misrepresentation never pays, and the carpers at Islam have had cause to rue the moment when they entered on their despicable campaign of distorting Islamic truths. We knew we should have to meet opposition, but it collapsed after our arrival. At first we were treated to a "cold douche" by the non-Muslims, but this was never repeated, and we soon found appreciative audiences everywhere. Invitations for lectures on Islam began to pour in from European quarters, and the mayors and magistrates of several towns willingly consented to preside at our meetings. The Message of Islam was given in every town I visited. The claims of the Faith as set forth by the Holy Prophet Muhammad were laid before the white audiences with marvellous results. Some of the speakers, while proposing votes of thanks, went so far as to say that if the message given by me did truly represent Islam, then they were Muslims. This is the reason for the publication of these pages. Others were honest enough to admit that the religion expounded by us was the one they had been seeking. It was openly admitted at almost every lecture, even by responsible Church people, that Islam, although at variance with formal Christianity—and traditional Christianity—practised the same truth as Jesus did.

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The traditional Christianity, coined by the Church, in the West, was also shown to be traceable to paganism. There was a very great demand for my book, *The Sources of Christianity*, which was read by many with great interest and advantage. The situation thus created could not fail to disturb the indifferent attitude adopted by the Church here ; and the Bishop of Pretoria deemed it necessary to write in the columns of the public Press in defence of the Church dogma. I welcome his attempt and admire him for the temperate nature of his remarks as well as for the boldness of his convictions, and I also thank his lordship for giving me an opportunity to examine his point of view. For this purpose I have devoted a chapter¹ to him in this book. I hope he will appreciate our attitude towards Christianity.

The time at my disposal when delivering the Message was hardly sufficient to do full justice to the subject. Things which needed an hour's talk had to be content with minutes. Many statements made in the course of the lecture demand amplification and elucidation, which I give them in these pages. I have given my principal lecture, as nearly as possible, in the form in which I delivered it. Questions were invited at almost every place where the Message was delivered, and some of the statements made in reply have been incorporated in the body of the lecture ; while the rest I give in these pages in the form of appendices. I also add some pages from my book *The Ideal Prophet*, on the question of woman, which were also read to the audiences.

I am indebted to Mr. Ebrahim A. Kader for the valuable services he rendered to me in writing these pages from my dictation.

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¹ See pages i-viii *supra*.

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RELIGION dawned when man was born. It was given to our first parents, in the Garden of God, in Eden or elsewhere. It was the religion of commandment and obedience—permission and prohibition, to bring them complete happiness. But they made a mistake. It was not intentional but through forgetfulness.¹ They forgot the warning and made wrong use of discretion, and this brought the whole trouble. They trespassed beyond the allowed limits, and so evil was born therefrom. They lost all that contributed to their happiness; they lost the heaven they were in, fear and grief overtook them, and they were groping in the dark. God, in His mercy, came to them again and showed them the way to happiness; they were also assured that their children too would receive such guidance from time to time, to keep them on the right path, and the Divine promise was never allowed to remain unfulfilled during all the centuries to come.

The children of Adam became scattered in the course of time; they became separated from one another by natural or artificial barriers; but the need for guidance from the Most High was ever present, and God in His Beneficence was pleased to bless each and every community and race of man with a religion. Every country and nation had their message from the Lord, through His chosen ones. They brought the same truth and drank from the same fountain. But those were the days when there were no reliable means of preserving the Message in its entirety, as the Word of God went from mouth to mouth. Defects inevitably crept in, seeing that man's

¹ The Qur-ān, xx. 115.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 37, 38.

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memory was its only custodian. The Divine gold became alloyed through human hands. Accretions and additions to, or subtractions from, the Word of God were constantly made. Besides, the languages in which the Revealed Word was couched were in a constant state of flux as to both form and meaning. The Books of God consequently could not remain in popular language for ever. Thus came the necessity of their being rendered into a language that all could understand. But these new translations shared the same fate, as the languages were changing incessantly. Translation after translation came. It affected the pristine beauty and purity of the Books. The result was that almost every Book of God disappeared, or became, from the text point of view, corrupt. The Bible met the same fate, and to-day no Christian can honestly believe in the genuineness of his Scriptures. The religion could not, therefore, remain in the form in which it was originally given. Christianity "was corrupt and decrepit," to quote Sir William Muir, at the advent of Islam. Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, in short, every religion of God, became crippled and could not exercise its healthy influence in the moulding of human character. Religion, even in its best form, at that time was taken as an institution of prayers, hymns and offerings—and that only to get more worldly things from the Lord ; otherwise its chief features were ritualism or sacrificialism.

Salvation through blood was not a new dispensation through Jesus, but a re-echo of the ancient world. Jesus was, in fact, only the last of the Slain Gods. There had arisen many a Christ before him, to save humanity through their blood, who, as the Pagans believed, were begotten Sons of God, born of Virgin Mothers on the 25th of December, killed on the Friday before Easter, resurrected on Easter Sunday and ascended to heaven on the Easter. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I read a few lines from my

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book, *The Sources of Christianity*,¹ that will substantiate my remarks.

In reply to a letter written by me to the editor of a famous Free Church paper in London in this connection, I received the following reply:—

25th August, 1925.

THE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN,

DEAR SIR,—Thank you for your letter of the 24th instant. I think you misread the paragraph in the . . . in reference to your book. Bishop Barnes speaks for himself, but he is not entitled to speak for Free Churchmen; certainly not for Baptists. On reference to the paragraph you will see that it is distinctly limited and does not cover the wide area set out in your nine paragraphs. Without entering

¹ MITHRA.—Mithraism came from Persia, where it seems to have been flourishing for about six hundred years, the cult reaching Rome about 70 B.C. It spread through the Empire, and extended to Great Britain. Remains of Mithraic monuments have been discovered at York, Chester and other places. Mithra was believed to be a great *Mediator between God and man. His birth took place in a cave on December 25th. He was born of a virgin. He travelled far and wide; he had twelve disciples; he died in the service of humanity. He was buried, but rose again from the tomb. His resurrection was celebrated with great rejoicing.** His great festivals were the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox—Christmas and Easter. He was called *Saviour*, and sometimes figured as a *Lamb*. People were initiated into his cult through *baptism*. *Sacramental feasts* were held in his remembrance. These statements may excite surprise in the mind of the reader of to-day; he may be disposed to doubt their genuineness, as while on one side he reads the story of the Jesus of the Church, of the legend of Mithra on the other; Mithraism has left no traces in the world, though it was so powerful in the third century A.D. that, had it not been suppressed in Rome and Alexandria by the Christians with physical force, as has been admitted by St. Jerome, it would have left no chance for the flourishing of Christianity; and that it died only when most of its legends became incorporated in the simple faith of Jesus,† and the Church lore was fully saturated with Mithraic colours, so much so that Tertullian had to admit the fact, though in a way befitting his position. He says that the learned in his days considered Mithraism and Christianity identical in all but name. St. Jerome and other Early Fathers became puzzled at the similarity existing between the two faiths, but their ingenuity ascribed it to the machinations of the Devil to mock their faith.

* Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, p. 338.

† *Ibid.*, p. 350.

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into any discussion of the matters to which you refer, I may say that Christians do not claim that the birth of Christ occurred on 25th December. The 25th December was a convenient date arranged by the Church for the celebration of the event. Neither is it claimed that the crucifixion actually occurred on the Friday before Easter Sunday, or that Easter Sunday was the actual date of the resurrection ; here again the Church fixed on these days as most convenient for the celebration and not as identifying them with the occurrences. The other matters would require far more space than could be given in a brief letter of this character. You are aware that many volumes have been written upon the subject.

Thanking you for your courteous note,

Yours faithfully,

THE EDITOR,

...

But the editor forgot to note that the events narrated about Jesus in connection with these dates are entirely the same as those that occurred on the same dates in the lives of the Pagan deities. It is not only the dates, therefore, which were conveniently taken by the heads of the Church of the first and second centuries, from the Mystery Cult, to popularize their faith in the Pagan World, but the convenience went farther. Every bit of the heathen story was incorporated in the story of Jesus on Easter Sunday ; but this was only a myth with which Jesus was clothed.

Moreover, the moral conditions of the time when Islam appeared were deplorable. Depravity had reached its lowest ebb. Righteousness had become well-nigh extinct, and the blackest evil was practised to earn merit in the eye of God. Beliefs were perverted and actions rendered corrupt. In the Confessionals in Christendom, more sins were committed than were washed away. In Persia phallicism was at its height. Mazdak, the prophet of the cult, had allowed partnership in women, and the deity was worshipped with every species of Bacchanalian orgy. In India the conditions were even worse. A Shaktic priest was privileged to claim the company of any women he liked for his pleasure. Evils of every kind had become, as it were,

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canonized into various gods and goddesses, who were worshipped through the practice of these evils. The world, since its birth, had never seen such sinful days, when the thick clouds of impurity, wickedness and ignorance had darkened the whole horizon. Complete death—moral, mental and spiritual—had overtaken the world.

If a Messenger from the Lord comes to a nation at a time when evil of some sort is sapping her very life, the vile conditions obtaining in the world in the sixth century of the Christian era most certainly demanded the appearance either of several prophets, in different parts of the world, or of a prophet of a master mind, enhaloed with Divine Light sufficient to remove the darkness from the whole world. Muhammad was chosen for the task, and appeared in Arabia, which at that time was this blackest spot on the earth of God, and there he brought the Message of Islam.

The mantle of Prophethood fell on the Holy Prophet, and the Call came: "Read in the Name of your Lord Who created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most honourable" (Qur-ân, xcvi. 1-3), and intends to make man the same. Muhammad aroused men from their death-like sleep and carried them to the highest pinnacle of development. The most debased of sinners became men of righteousness and piety, keeping all the laws of God, and respecting the ordinances of society. "What a wonderful change occurred, as if an Angel from Heaven had passed through the land, breathing harmony and love into the hearts of those who had hitherto been sunk in the most revolting semi-barbarism." ¹

¹ *Spirit of Islam*. In the same connection Sir William Muir says:—"Few and simple were the precepts of Muhammad. His teaching had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep and waged mortal combat with heathenism had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life, the like faith that suffered sacrifices and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience' sake.

[Note continued on p. 12.]

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" From time beyond memory Mecca and the whole Peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influences of Judaism, Christianity or philosophical inquiry upon the Arab mind had been but as the ruffling here and there of the surface of a quiet lake ; all remained still and motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice. It was a common practice for the eldest son to take to wife his father's widows, inherited as property with the rest of the estate. Pride and poverty had introduced among them (as they have among the Hindus) the crime of female infanticide. Their religion was a gross idolatry, and their faith rather the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings, whose good will they sought to propitiate and whose displeasure to avert, than the belief in an overruling Providence. The life to come and retribution for good and evil were, as motives of actions, practically unknown. Thirteen years before the Hijra (July 2, A.D. 622), Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced ! A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of one God and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed to be a revelation from Him, praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon to His mercy and striving to follow after good works, almsgiving, chastity and justice. They now lived under a constant sense of the Omnipotent power of God and of His Providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of Nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. And above all, the new existence in which they exulted was regarded as the mark of special grace, while the unbelief of their blinded fellow-citizens was the hardening stamp of reprobation. Muhammad was the minister of life to them, the source under God of their newborn hopes, and to him they yielded an implicit submission.

" In so short a period Mecca had, from his wonderful movement, been rent into two factions which, unmindful of their old landmarks of tribe and family, had arrayed themselves in deadly opposition one against the other. The Believers bore persecution with a patient and tolerant spirit, and though it was their wisdom so to do, the credit of magnanimous forbearance may be freely accorded. One hundred men and women, rather than abjure their precious faith, had abandoned home and sought refuge, till the storm should be overpast, in Abyssinian exile, and again a still large number, with the Prophet himself, were emigrating from their fondly loved city with its sacred temple, to them the holiest spot on earth, and fleeing to Medina. There the same marvellous charm had within two or three years been preparing for them a brotherhood ready to defend the Prophet and his followers with their blood. Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of the men of Medina, but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet that they, too, awoke from their slumber and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life."

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Idolatry, devil-worship and fetishism were rooted out, gambling, drunkenness and adultery disappeared, polygamy was regulated and slavery nearly abolished. Female chastity became a virtue, industry replaced idleness. The Kingdom of Heaven, prayed for by Jesus and others, was established in Arabia.¹ Like lightning, Islam shot forth out into the various horizons of the world, carrying with it knowledge, culture, civilization, virtue and piety. The Holy Prophet was the most successful of all the Prophets and religious personalities,² including even those accepted as Gods-incarnate by some. And this speaks volumes for the beauty and greatness of the message that came through him to the world.

“There is nothing,” says G. B. Smith in his book, *Scenes from European History*, “more remarkable in history than the rapidity with which Mohammed’s followers became a civilized people. Less than two centuries after his death Baghdad and Damascus had become beautiful and magnificent cities, the centres of luxury and of intellectual progress. In them lived philosophers, scientists, physicians, and men of letters, at a time when Europe was still involved in its great struggle with the forces of barbarism and savagery. The number of our words derived from Arabic, such as almanac, cotton, alkali, zero, sugar, carat, artichoke, sofa, alcohol and mattress, bear witness to their activity in various branches of knowledge, and to the debt which we owe them. The Saracens became profound students of astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, and medicine. At Baghdad and Cairo were universities with as many as 12,000 students, and libraries containing several hundred thousand volumes. They gave us our numerals, the decimal system of notation, and the whole science of algebra. In their observatories they identified and classified great numbers of the stars, many of which are still

¹ See *Ideal Prophet*.

² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition; art. “Koran.”

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known to us by Arabic names. It is said that they had a knowledge of the composition of gunpowder and of the use of the mariner's compass long before these two things were known and used in the West. They knew the secrets of dyeing, of weaving, of paper-making. They were able, by scientific grafting, to produce new varieties of flowers, fruit, and useful plants, and they reduced farming and vine-growing to a fine art. Their skill in metal-working and in the manufacture of glass and pottery has never been surpassed. Damascus was famed for its fine woven fabrics and its sword-blades, as our words 'damask' and 'damascened' still testify. Their commerce attained vast proportions. Their caravans and their merchant fleets linked together China, Russia, Egypt, and Spain."

The world has not been without her reformers and prophets before and after Islam. But history fails to lay its finger upon a single personality, other than Muhammad, who could perform the real function of a Messenger from the Lord in doing good to the whole world. Nay, I would go further; I would say, no other prophet's claim could be considered as such if Muhammad could not be accepted as a Prophet from the Above. Ours are days of utility and not of sentimentality. We hardly need a Prophet to read us homilies or sermons on visionary ideals—things standing beyond human reach cannot be considered as ideals—or give us lessons on ceremonials. We need no "slain deity" to wash off our sin through the magic of his blood. A Messenger from the Lord should come like the spring which resuscitates the dead nature; he should raise again the lifeless mass and arouse humanity from her torpor. His teaching should illumine benighted hearts and put forth before them ideals that help human progress on material, mental and spiritual planes. He should raise the human mind above ignorance, and expose the falsity of wrong beliefs. In a word, he should stir the stagnant pool of humanity, and

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bring forth out of it a living stream. All this Muhammad accomplished. Look at the condition of the whole world before and after him. Culture and progress followed him immediately in Muslim lands—movements which influenced the whole world afterwards and continues to do the same till to-day. Things unknown in the realm of knowledge came to light through his teaching and led to modern civilization. Even in the field of religion, Muhammad caused a wonderful revolution in its every corner. Study Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and other faiths of the world as they stood at the advent of Islam; compare their respective modern beliefs with what they believed at first. Everywhere reformation followed Islam. Every religion is now moulded, or is on its way to become so, in Islamic cast. Polytheistic tendencies are on the wane, and mankind embraces the Muslim Monotheism. Superstitions are disappearing. Observe the present movements in the Christian Church. What disgust with the old order is here! Nay, the whole Modernist movement is based on Islamic laws.

Islam literally means, implicit submission to Divine Laws, or the complete subjugation of our human will to the Will of the Lord. This obedience to God does not mean the bondage of man, in any sense, or the rule of an Arbitrary Will over him, but it means Divine Guidance in this working out of the real object of religion.

The religious passion in us, like our other instincts, must be satisfied in a way that may help the growth of our nature. Religion, therefore, must have the same object. The Qur-án defines religion thus: "Then set your face upright, for religion is the right state, the nature made by Allah in which He has made man; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know" ¹ (xxx. 30).

The sacred words give both the objective and subjective

¹ See Appendix I.

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aspects of religion. They point out the goal as well as the means to reach it—the aim and the procedure. The aim is to work out our nature to its best advantage, and the procedure lies in “setting our face upright in the right state.”

This leads me to say something of human nature and of its capabilities. Christian theology sees no good in it. Human nature, it says, is sinful and tainted from birth, and the blot on it could not be removed except through our belief in The Blood. Islam, however, takes quite a contrary view of the case. It tells us that we enter into the world with a nature pure and untainted and capable of soaring to Divine precincts. Sin, we are told, is not among the furniture of our nature ; it is a subsequent acquisition that results when we abuse our capabilities.

The whole question turns on our nature and its capacities. We, no doubt, are capable of sin, but we are also capable of resisting it. The error in Christian theology lies in mistaking capacity for nature. Nature is not tainted. It possesses an inclination towards wrong. It is abuse of our inclinations that germinates evil. But this is true of everything in Nature. A simple thing like water, which is a blessing, will play havoc, if uncontrolled. The fire that does so much good to humanity is capable of reducing whole towns to ashes. Everything that comes from God is for our good. It possesses certain properties which may be misapplied. Opium, which drugs our senses and numbs our faculties, has invaluable medicinal properties. Everything has its use and an occasion for it. It becomes a blessing—and that was the purpose for which it was created—if only we try and find out its use, its occasion and the right measure in which it is to be used. The Qur-án revealed this truth, when it said, “And He made the measure that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure” (lv. 7-8).

In fact, God is the measurer of good and evil. Every measure of everything is for good. But what is good for A

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is evil for B. The food of a thorny shrub is the destroyer of a fruitful tree. It is in finding out the property of measure that brings forth all prosperity. It was to emphasize the importance of the knowledge of measure that the principle of good and evil measure was included in the Muslim articles of faith: *Wa'l-Qadri Khairehi wa sharrihi min'L-láhi t'álá*—I believe in measurement of good and evil from God—in short, it is the mishandling or misapplication of things that is responsible for the world of evil. We need knowledge of these things. Science has come to check various diseases and disasters: the same is true of human nature; man is Nature's masterpiece; he is capable of soaring to the highest of the high, but he is also capable of sinking to the lowest of the low. His soaring or sinking are the two same phases of the power of moving. Fire has been given a capability of exuding heat: it may cook a dish or burn a whole house. We have to find out how to control the elements, and thus we can convert a seeming curse into a blessing. Similarly, we need knowledge of the nature of our passions. The world before Islam lacked the revelation of these truths, and the message came from the Lord in the following words: "Certainly We created man in the best make, then We render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward, never to be cut off. Then who can give you the lie after (this) about the judgment?" (Qur-án, xciv. 4-7).

Other messengers before Islam told us that man was after the image of the Lord, but the Message went further and gave us the greatest of all tidings. It declared that we were the vicegerents of God on the earth and were capable of assuming His colours. It showed us the way to achieve this grandest object.

Islam thus came with quite a new conception of religion. It did not speak either of "an angered Deity" whose wrath could be propitiated only through offerings of flesh and blood, or whose pleasure could be secured through ceremonialism or

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the singing of hymns and repetition of words in His praise. The Book of Islam—the Qur-án—says :—

“ There does not reach Allah (God) their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable righteousness ” (xxii. 37).

“ It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets and give away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of kin, and the orphan and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate ; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise and the patient in distress and affliction has time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who are righteous ” (ii. 177).

“ Be grateful to Allah (God). And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul ; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, praised ” (xxxi. 2).

These verses dispense with the religion of the “ Grace of Blood ” as well as with ceremonialism. The Qur-án attaches no value to Ritualism and Sacraments. It treats of the religion of Beliefs and Action with a view to attaining some purpose. The last verse, it is true, speaks of Divine glorification and the duty of thanksgiving. But it is for the benefit of our own souls, seeing that God is “ Self-sufficient and Praised.” Even amongst us one who seeks praise and “ fishes for compliments ” fails to command our respect ; we call him conceited. What, then, would be our estimation of a God whose pleasure consisted in hearing praises and thanksgivings from His own creatures, and that, too, for the maintenance and continuance of His own scheme of creation ? Islam, no doubt, enjoins prayers and thanksgiving. But it gives to them quite a new meaning. The Qur-án calls prayer a reminder. The Muslim Prayer has been couched in words

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that eloquently show the relations existing between man and God, and the course pursued by Divine economy, in showering His blessings on His creatures. Again, the words of the prayer prompt us to seek to mould our actions in the Divine cast. We are also taught clearly that lip-gratitude carries no weight with the Lord. Thanksgiving in Islam consists in making proper use of Divine blessings, to our own edification. Prayer and thanksgiving in Islam are in fact, disciplinary measures for working out our spiritual development.

Everything around us appears to possess inherent qualities. The atomic world and its various combinations are repositories of numberless capacities. They only await favourable circumstances to bring their latent faculties to full fruition. A seed is a potential tree and a sand-shell a royal palace; the light of a glow-worm evolves into an electric arc, and the noise of a cricket into a grand oratorio. Everything, in short, is on its way to advancement. Should we not expect the same of human nature? Our frame is the best produce of Nature. It comprises particles of everything in the universe. All the faculties of the animal kingdom have become collocated in human consciousness. Is it imaginable that this world of wonderful probabilities and possibilities is meant to remain dormant? Islam says "No." It says that the main object of religion is to make these probabilities and possibilities a reality, and therein lies the true satisfaction of our religious instinct.

The Message draws our attention—bids us contemplate the whole universe around us; everything therein is in a state of progress. It contains innumerable latent properties, and only awaits favourable circumstances to favour their evolution. We are similarly told in the Qur-án that man, the best product of Nature, has accumulated in him every other thing in the universe; that every physical thing in the firmament on high, or in the bowels of the earth, became transferred to

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the human frame in a conscious form. These took to themselves the shape of passions ; human consciousness got, as it were, its constitution from the ether and the earth, and whatever shines in the heavens or comes out from the earth is reposing in man's heart. He has to work it out, not on the physical, but on the mental, moral and spiritual planes.¹ We needed guidance for this, and that guidance is to be found in the Revelation of the Holy Qur-án. The Message declared that God was not an impersonal God, that He was not clothed with human passions, that His wrath is not like that of man, nor became He, ever, so angered with man on account of his sin that a wide gulf began to yawn between the two, and that His wrath, for its propitiation, demanded not great sacrifices, such as the blood of man—nay, that of His only begotten Son—to bridge the yawning gulf. The Message told that God was nearer to us than our jugular vein. He was ever ready to accept man's repentance and return to him.² His pleasure was not like that of man, nor His anger like ours. His pleasure consisted in the fulfilment of the object for which man was created, and became manifested in the fruition of human faculties. Similarly, His wrath was aroused when we, through our inordinacy, deliberately neglected the Guidance He had provided. We had to praise and glorify Him ; but lip-gratitude, as the Message warned us, carried no weight with the Lord. Divine glorification consisted in self-edification.

In short, God gave us religion, so that we might work out all that was best and noblest in us. The Message told us that the " best and noblest " in us was the Divine Spirit which the Lord had breathed into us when we were created.³

The Creative Agency in us is concealed in our passions in their initial form ; we have to remove these coverings that impede our progress, and thus bring the Divine Flame

¹ See Appendix II.

² The Qur-án, xl. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, xxxii. 72.

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smouldering in our hearts to full lustre. If our clay was fashioned after the image of the Lord, we have to vivify the dust with Divine Life. Something of God is in us, and we must manifest it. It is to achieve this grand end that the Message ordains that certain of the excellent names of God are to be recited when a Muslim invokes Divine help in his prayers. We repeat these names, not because the Lord God is pleased when He hears His praises from our lips. No, He is too exalted for that. We have, on the other hand, to dye ourselves in His colours. By means of our prayers we are enabled to keep some of His attributes before our minds, in order to reproduce them in our daily life; seeing that Islam does not permit us to seek our prototype in man, even if he has been accepted by some as God Incarnate. Prophets are exemplars and not prototypes; we have to dip ourselves, as it were, in the Divine dye and “receive the baptism of Allah, and who is better than Allah in baptizing, and Him do we serve.”¹

The Message laid down a prayer which the Muslim says five times a day. It begins with the four Names of God, in the following words: *Al-Hamdu lillāhi Rabb'il-'Ālamin, Ar-Rahmāni 'Rahīm, Māliki Yaum'id-Dīn*—All praise and glory is due to Allah, Who is the Lord of all worlds, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful and the Master of the Day of Requital. This English translation of the Arabic text hardly conveys the meaning of the sacred words. The Arabic words are too rich in their meanings to be fully expressed by any synonyms in English. I will try and explain them in the following words: “All praise and glory is due to Allah (God), Who is the Creator, Nourisher and Maintainer of all the worlds, Who reposes various faculties in everything and then arranges means and stages of development whereby we may bring these faculties to perfection; Who, in order to work out His scheme of

¹ The Qur-ān, ii. 138.

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creation, creates in and for His creatures all that is needed. And all this, not as a reward for anything, but because He is Beneficent ; nay, He looks to our needs before they can come into existence ; Who, through His mercy, comes to us with a thousand rewards for one good action, and, if we commit wrong, often forgives us ; but if He punishes us for our misdeeds, it is for our correction and not out of wrath or vengeance."

These are the chief attributes of God spoken of in the Qur-ân—the Revealed Book of Islam—which attributes, in fact, comprehend every other holy Name mentioned therein. Everything in Nature bears testimony to these attributes. If we repeat these Names so many times a day in our prayer, we do so in order to be mindful of them in our daily life.

A section of the world of to-day goes after occult powers. These are possibilities, nay, they are our goal, because they, in their perfect form, are the powers and attributes of God, and their achievement by us is to evoke into actual practical existence the Spirit of God, which has been breathed into us. But if we wish to achieve some semblance of these Divine powers, we should walk humbly with the Lord and assume His colours. We must practise Divine morals. Hence a Muslim's prayer speaks chiefly of the above-mentioned Names. We worship Allah by translating these Names into action. The rest of our prayers are an invocation for help and guidance in the true path. In this respect, the Muslim prayer ¹ surpasses all the prayers of other religions in its beauty and grandeur.

¹ The Muslim prayer translated into English reads as follows :—
" In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favours. Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray."

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These four attributes also contradict all such doctrines as are contrary to Muslim beliefs, little are the doctrines of Gods-incarnate, the Atonement, the Reincarnation of the Soul, Atheism and so forth.

In order to put this theory into practice, the following verse is recited to the Muslim congregation from the pulpit at the end of the sermon on Friday, the Muslim Sabbath Day : *Inn'Allaha ya'muru bil-'Adli wa'l-Ihsán wa ttái zil-Qurbá wa yanhá 'ani'l-Fahshái, wa'l-Munkari wa'l-Baghy ya'izukum l'allakum tazakkarín,*¹ which may be translated as follows : " God commands you to be equitable—give to others their due and take from them what is due to you and do not exceed the limits. It is only the very first principle for maintaining the structure of human society in proper order ; we have to go beyond it and be beneficent to others, i.e. to give to others more than their due ; we have to treat them as members of our own family and give to them as we give to our kindred ; and God forbids (every) indecency, and evil that involves denial of other's right—we should not do anything that injures our person, property or name, as our own self, as the Prophet says, has a claim on us ; similarly we should not injure our neighbours in any way, nor should we do anything that injures the whole society, or violates the law. A Muslim should not do anything that affects the *status quo*, but if he finds anything wrong in the rule to which he is subject, he is ordered by Islam to put the matter before the ruler and protest against it strongly—the Holy Prophet describes such an action as a Holy Striving—*Jihádi Akbar*—but not to do a seditious act. God admonishes you, that you may be mindful."

I wish the world could have observed these Qur-ánic ethics ; for then the angels of God would have trod the earth, instead of the animals in human form, which we find

¹ The Qur-án, xvi. 90.

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everywhere. It would have put an end to all war and strikes and strife. Peace would rule over the earth and His will be done on earth as in heaven. Jesus prayed for the Kingdom of Heaven ; it needed a charter, and that was given to man in the shape of the Qur-án, the Message of Islam.

This lesson is meant to enable us to reproduce those very morals of God that have been enumerated in the beginning of the opening chapter of the Qur-án ; to curb our animality and bring it within proper control we should shun indecency. We should not injure the property, life and fame of others. We should not block the working of society, and we should not violate the law. It will bring the animal consciousness in us within its legitimate bounds. We must set to work honestly on honest lines. And in the distribution of wealth we have been given first the lesson of justice—to give others their due—but we have to do more ; we should pay to others on occasions more than that to which they are strictly speaking entitled. Nay, we have to go beyond that ; we have to treat the creatures of God as members of our own family. We have to regard the other units of humanity as our own children, brothers and sisters, and as our parents. Then the Millennium will begin its rule on God's earth.

These are the Divine morals, which it is our duty to emulate, but our animal nature stands in the way. Nay, man is worse than an animal, as the Qur-án says. The animal has its limits and its shortcomings. It has no capacity beyond that of gratifying its appetite. It never thinks of to-morrow ; whereas man has been given foresight, a capacity to gain and accumulate things that may suffice to meet his present and future needs and the needs of others also. Was this vastness of consciousness, this ability to acquire so much wealth, such hoards of comfort and happiness, given to him for self-aggrandisement and self-indulgence ? We cannot blame the animal

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for its limitations. And if God has been gracious enough to confer on man such unlimited capacities there must be some reason for this Divine dispensation—and there is, for man is the vicegerent of God, the ruler of the earth on His behalf. He must represent his Lord in all His ways. He must follow the great Prototype, who is God Himself. Human capacities and the resources of Nature, so lavishly placed at his disposal, are a Trust of God, with man as the Trustee, and the rest of creation as the beneficiaries—the inanimate, the dumb, and the animate world—including, too, those fellow-beings who are less gifted than other men; those who have not been vouchsafed sufficient opportunities and means for working out their capabilities and for making proper use of the resources of Nature. It means, moreover, the equitable distribution of wealth and gains. But the unconscientious working of man has created a mischievous struggle between man and man and brought sin in a great variety of shapes to the world. Capitalism and Labour, for example, are not, properly speaking, the two antagonists they profess themselves to-day. The trouble was brewing even in the case of the first sons of Adam, Abel and Cain. Abel amassed wealth through the use of his abilities, but Cain would not work. He wanted to share what Abel had without bearing the irksome brunt of life. Abel ought to have worked as a trustee of the gains he acquired for the benefit of Cain. He might have done so, but Cain declined to adopt the position of beneficiary. He resorted, therefore, to foul means and murdered his brother. But as the world became more and more civilized, murder and rapine disappeared in their naked horror, but the evil spirit that gives them birth is still at work. It assumes more refined forms for achieving its object. It has taken the shape of strife between Capital and Labour. The Capitalist will not act as trustee for the benefit of those less gifted, and the latter would not use proper means

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to bring about a share arrangement with the former, but seeks to force equalization of wealth by means that endanger economic conditions, and affect the whole body politic.

Socialism in the West, and the consequent "strikes," are the outcome of the same spirit. No system will prove of any practical use that seeks to abolish individual ownership of property and aims at the nationalization of the wealth of the country for the benefit of those who have no wish to work. It will leave no incentive for hard work, and will create nothing but idleness. The only possible way out of the difficulty is to appeal on the one hand to the charitable side of humanity and to create in man the noble sense that if he is blessed so that he is enabled to acquire more wealth than others, it is for their benefit. And on the other hand, to convince the less favoured class of the importance of relying on the working out of their own capabilities honestly and of not adopting means which may endanger the existence of society and most certainly cause grave injury to others. No legislation, no diplomacy can achieve such a purpose as this. Such may stave off catastrophe for a time, but it is Religion alone that can save the situation.

Yes, we have been fashioned after the image of Allah and we have to assume the colours of Allah—the One and the Only One God; and we should not associate with Him any other Deity lest we have many deities to worship and follow, which is the necessary consequence of polytheism.

Polytheism was at its worst when the Great Message came. Every manifestation of Nature had become deified. Man was worshipping various elements and their combinations. The sun, the moon, the stars, clouds, water, air, trees, serpents and stones were the objects of his adoration. Even those above such fetishism had bowed down their heads before men like unto them. Jesus, Ezra, Ramachandra, Krishna and others had been raised to divine pedestals. The Message came and preached Monotheism. The idea of One God was not a

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new one, but Islam established it in its purest form. It was not the passion of jealousy, as we read in the Scriptures,¹ that prompted the Most High to emphasize His Oneness in strong accents in the Qur-án. It was rather to put before man one specimen for his imitation. The man-made God, and even those who have been taken as Gods Incarnate, have fallen decidedly short of a hundred Divine virtues. Their lives are full of infirmities, nor can we see in them a full reproduction of Divine things. The glory and grandeur of God would not suffer in the least degree if thousands of millions of men were given the place of God. But polytheism damages man himself. It kills in him the spirit of emulation in virtue with those whom he adores as his God. We share with them all their capabilities. Undoubtedly there were evolved souls, but only in matters within our possible reach. They bore their own cross and they told us to do the same; through their exertions they obtained the Divine heritage, and the same heritage is open to us; but no sooner do we begin to regard them as gods than we lose all chances of reaping the heavenly harvest, the seed of which has been sown in our hearts by the Almighty Hand. It was to bring home to us this truth that Muhammad was ordered to say to his fellow-beings in the words of the Qur-án, "I am only a man like unto you." Jesus said the same when he was asked how he worked miracles. He was too noble to deny to others the ability of doing the same. So said the Master.² Albeit by saying prayers, keeping fast and doing the commandments. The West of to-day wants to achieve the same end, but it will

¹ Exodus xx.

² Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could we not cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief, for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting (Matt. xvii. 19-21).

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not act on the lines laid down by the Master to attain the object. It believes that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and saved mankind from doing the same through his blood. But it never acts on this dogma of "proxyism" when it is after other ends. A person suffering from headache can get its cure only through acting upon the prescription given to him by a physician, but no one would believe him if the latter chopped his head off and declared that, through his doing so, the patient would get relief. Jesus very rightly showed us the way whereby we may achieve the Divine powers open to man. Unfortunately his ministry became curtailed and he could not give the whole truth. The message came through Muhammad and gave us the charter of the Kingdom of God; and Islam has produced numberless divines in each century who did the same that has been done by the chosen of God.

But these are not the only fruits of monotheism, though they are the most desirable. Belief in the unity of God establishes equality between man and man, and germinates those democratic ideas which are the true health of human society in mundane affairs. Democracy is admittedly the child of Islam. Omar, the second successor of Muhammad, within a dozen years from Muhammad, formulated the following dictum, "A government cannot be worthy of its name under which the voice of the ruled remains unheard." Even the best constitutional government of to-day will hardly stand the test, if their rule was tried on the anvil of Omar's dictum. For the first time in the world, the right to rule, on the strength of descent, had to give way to election, and the elected ruler had only to work out the wishes of the ruled. The meanest among the subjects was encouraged by Omar to find fault with the ways of the sovereign authority. These democratic ideas opened other fields of activities to every child of man, which, previous to the coming of Islam, were only open to a few. The slave of to-day became the ruler of to-morrow, in

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Muslim lands. All barriers of caste, class or colour were demolished, and every man was given fair opportunity to vie with others in all high achievements. Does not the Western world owe all her present civilization and importance to democratic ideas which can safely be traced for their origin to Islam ?

In this connection the Message did another great service to humanity. It established a universal brotherhood of man, under the Fatherhood of God. It declared that every person was an equal member of God's family ¹ on the earth. Islam welded black and white, red and yellow, into one fraternity. The world seeks for peace, and that peace is still far off. They look for universalism, and they will not achieve it unless they act upon the Message of Islam. They kneel down every morning and evening and on their knees they say : " Our Father Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name," but they dishallow the Holy Name through their racial prejudices. They pray that " Thy will be done, in heaven as on earth," but by their own actions they bring the High Will to naught. The Will in Heaven manifests itself in creating everything for the universal good. But we usurp the rights of others. We will not allow others' interests to cumber the earth of God, which was created for the benefit of all the children of Adam.

The Message opened a wonderful vista of human comfort and civilization, in its insistence upon the worship of one God, when it declared that the various manifestations of Nature which humanity adored as deities, before Islam, had been created as if for the very purpose of being in subjection to

¹ " (All) people are a single nation, so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth, that it might judge between people in that which they differed ; and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves ; so Allah had guided by His will those who believe, to the truth about which they differed ; and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path " (Qur-án, ii. 213).

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man. "We (God) have made everything in Heaven and the Earth to be of sole service to you."¹ With one stroke, the Qur-án brought the pre-Islamic deities—the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the rivers, water and air—into human bondage; while those among the human race who had been deified were put on an equal footing with their fellows. It was also announced that everything in creation was for the use of man, and in order to induce him to discover their use, the Message made it a matter of great virtue for man, in the eye of the Lord, to make researches into the realms of Nature, in order to discover the utility, to himself, of its various components.²

Muslims were commanded to "reflect on the creation of the Heaven and the Earth" and to glorify the Creator in the light of his knowledge, "Our Lord Thou hast not created them in vain. Glory be to Thee."³

The Message thus, on its revelation, imparted energy and initiative to the human mind and impelled Muslims to investigate scientifically the marvels of creation. The world thus saw a tremendous upheaval of science and culture in the early days of Islam, especially in fields still unexplored. Muslims laid the foundation of what is termed modern science to-day.⁴ The world has, of course, not yet reached the height

¹ "And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most surely there are signs in this for a people that ponder" (Qur-án, xvi. 12, and cf. Qur-án, xiii. 2).

² "Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord Thou hast not created this in vain; glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire" (Qur-án, iii. 190).

³ Qur-án, iii. 109.

⁴ Chemistry, botany, geology, natural history, astronomy and the various branches of mathematics occupied the attention of Muslim scholars. Humboldt rightly called Arabs the real founders of the physical sciences, and modern chemistry is admittedly the invention of the Muslims. Jabir-bin Hayyan, known as Geber in the Western world, wrote some five hundred treatises on chemistry. It was in Spain that chemistry was firmly rooted in Europe at first, and that

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of scientific attainment prescribed for her by the Qur-án ; we have yet to harness the sun and the moon and the various other luminaries to serve us, for the Book repeatedly speaks of their subservience to us.¹ The Muslim seats of learning science would have reached its zenith had the Muslims not suffered the great disaster of the defeat at Tours, in A.D. 731, by Charles Martel.

Every branch of higher mathematics bears traces of Muslim genius ; they discovered equations of the second degree and very soon developed the theory of quadratic equations and the binomial theorem. They invented spherical trigonometry and applied algebra to geometry for the first time. Al-Batan, the great Muslim astronomer, was the introducer of "sine and cosine." Muslim progress in mathematical geography was no less remarkable. At a time when Europe firmly believed in the flatness of the earth, the Arabs taught geography by the globe. They calculated the size of the earth from the measurement of a degree on the shore of the Red Sea. In physical sciences the method of experimentation was substituted for theory. Ibn Yunoos invented the pendulum, and the measurement of time by oscillation. The science of optics also owes much to Muslim labour. Al-Hazan corrected the misconceptions of the Greeks as to the nature of vision, and demonstrated, for the first time in history, that rays of light come from the external object to the eye, and not from the eye itself, impinging on external things. He showed the retina as the seat of vision and proved that the impressions made upon it were conveyed along the nerves to the brain. He discovered that the refraction of light varied with the density of the atmosphere and vice versa. He discovered the correct relations between the velocities, also the spaces and times of falling bodies ; and he was aware of capillary attraction.

¹ "And if you ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and moon subservient, they will certainly say, Allah. Whence are they turned away ?" (Qur-án, xxix. 61). "He causes the night to enter in upon the day, and He causes the day to enter in upon the night, and He has made subservient (to you) the sun and the moon : each one follows its course to an appointed time : this is Allah, your Lord. His is the kingdom ; and those whom you call upon besides Him do not control a straw" (Qur-án, xxxv. 13). "Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you see, and He is firm in power, and He made the sun and moon subservient (to you) ; each one pursues its course to an appointed time ; He regulates the affair, making clear the communications that you may be certain of meeting your Lord" (Qur-án, xiii. 2). "He has created the heavens and the earth with the truth ; He makes the night cover the day and makes the day overtake the night, and He has made the sun and moon subservient ; each one runs on to an appointed term. Now surely He is the Mighty, the Great Forgiver" (Qur-án, xxxix. 5).

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became, in those days, the rendezvous¹ of scholars from the West, who carried the light of knowledge to the then benighted Western world, where public libraries were destroyed and science branded as magic, and philosophy and science exterminated. Pope Gregory the Great burned the Palatine Library. Science and literature were placed under a ban by Orthodox Christianity. In a word, the ecclesiastical maxim was "Ignorance is the mother of Devotion."

While dealing with the question of equality between man and man, the Message brought a real Gospel of Emancipation to that half of the human race, whose rights up to then had been absolutely ignored; I refer to the female side of humanity. No pre-Islamic religion, civilization or legislation did anything to raise woman from the degraded position accorded to her in human society. The mediæval theology of Christendom brought her to the lowest depths. The Message came, and declared that man and woman had been created

¹ Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, in *The Moors in Spain*, says: "Beautiful as were the palaces and gardens of Cordova, her claims to admiration in higher matters were no less strong. The mind was as lovely as the body. Her professors and teachers made her the centre of European culture; students would come from all parts of Europe to study under her famous doctors. Every branch of science was seriously studied there, and medicine received more and greater additions by the discoveries of the doctors and surgeons of Andalusia than it had gained during all the centuries that had elapsed since the days of Galen. Astronomy, geography, chemistry, natural history, all were studied with ardour at Cordova; and as for the graces of literature, there never was such a time, when poetry became the speech of everybody; so much so that no speech or address was complete without some scraps of verse." To these remarks we may add the words of Renan: "The taste for science and literature had, by the tenth century, established, in this privileged corner of the world, a toleration of which modern times hardly offer us an example. Christians, Jews, and Mussalmans spoke the same tongue, sang the same songs, participated in the same literary and scientific studies. All the barriers which separated the various people were effaced, all worked with one accord in the work of a common civilization. The mosques of Cordova, where the students could be counted by thousands, became the active centres of philosophical and scientific studies."

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from the same essence.¹ Muhammad said that "woman was the twin of man" and possessed a human soul. All that was open to man, morally, mentally and spiritually, was, to precisely the same extent, open to her.²

Her rights were sacred. To her is due what is due from her. She was not a slave in the house, but an equal partner with man in the world.³ Whatever rights woman has obtained have been partly the result of her own exertions, and partly the influence of the Islamic spirit concerning woman's rights, that pervades modern thought.

Slavery was another abominable institution in all parts of the world. No one before Muhammad had come to the rescue of the unfortunate class. Even that gentle soul, the great Nazarene, who was full of love and affection for his fellow-man, is not recorded to have said a single word in favour of slaves. Perhaps the period of his ministry was too short, or that we do not possess the full record of his teachings; but it would appear that the question of ameliorating the condition of the slave, as well as of woman, did not seem to concern Jesus. Muhammad abolished every form of slavery, excepting war captivity. He raised funds to ransom those who were in bondage. His teachings on the point brought the treatment to be meted out to slaves, to such a standard of equality with the master, that the latter would rather free the former than keep him in slavery. Christianity, as history

¹ Cf. Qur-án, iv. 1.

² "Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, the humble men and the humble women, the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember—Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward" (Qur-án, xxxiii. 35).

³ See Appendix III.

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shows, has been more criminal in the propagation of slavery than any other religion or legislation in the world. Only a century ago, London was a big slave-market. In various treaties between European nations we find provisions¹ under which one signatory had to supply so many slaves to the other; and though this curse of the blackest dye on the human race has now been removed through various enactments of the British Parliament, and other Western countries, yet the treatment meted out to the aborigines in Christian colonies has reduced them to a condition worse than slavery.

Islam rendered another important service to humanity when it preached complete religious toleration. Though religion came from the Lord; to establish harmonious relations between men, it became itself the root of every kind of discord and disturbance in different branches of the human race. Each man thought that his was the religion from God, while the adherents of other persuasions were looked upon as followers of the devil. This created narrow-mindedness and dissension, which reached such a height in the sixth century, that the persecution, even of those who, though Christians, did not see eye to eye with the others on certain doctrines, was deemed by the latter to be a piece of great virtue. Christianity began to walk knee-deep in human blood, and the Church invented weapons of persecutions, the very thought of which causes a shudder. In a word, religious intolerance was at its height, when Islam came and the world felt a crying need for relief. It was at that juncture that the Message of Peace came, in the following words: “(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed; and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to

¹ See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. “Slavery.”

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them, revolting among themselves ; so Allah has guided by His will those who believe, to the truth about which they differed ; and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.”¹

The Message also declared that all religions before Islam were of Divine origin ; that every nation and community had been given a Guide, a Prophet and a Warner from the Lord,² and they brought the same message to various nations, but the human hand had alloyed the Divine truth ; which truth³ required restoration to its original purity, and the Qur-án claimed this for its mission. An Apostle from Allah came in the person of Muhammad, “ reciting pure pages wherein are all the right books ”⁴ revealed before. It was also pronounced that there should be no compulsion in furthering any religion,⁵ and a Muslim was commanded even to wage war, to establish religious freedom for every faith in the world. Religion, it was taught, was a matter between God and man, and no one had any right to come between him and the Creator. A Muslim was admonished to preach religious truths in the goodliest manner⁶ and never to force his religious opinion upon others.

¹ Qur-án, ii. 213.

² “ By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement ” (Qur-án, xvi. 63).

³ “ Surely We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and a Warner ; and there is not a people but a Warner has gone among them ” (Qur-án, xxxv. 24).

⁴ “ An apostle from Allah, reciting pure pages. Wherein are all the right books ” (Qur-án, xcvi. 2-3).

⁵ “ There is no compulsion in religion ; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error ; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing ” (Qur-án, ii. 256).

⁶ “ Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner ; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path and He knows best those who follow the right way ” (Qur-án, xvi. 125).

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In Islam, for the first time in the world, reason was made the test of faith. All dogmatic teachings were declared to be unworthy of notice. Intelligence and logic were the only anvil on which religious truths were to be beaten out. We read verse after verse in the Qur-án, which elucidate Islamic truths, and refer to our observations and experience of the various phenomena in Nature. Such verses often end with words like the following: "There is a sign for those who reflect, who ponder, who understand."¹ It was also laid down that there was no conflict between religion and science. Muhammad is the first Prophet among the blessed race, who, though he himself knew not how to read or write, yet made the acquirement of knowledge a religious duty.² He said: "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr." A night, he said, spent in contemplation and prayer for guidance, was equal in merit to prayers of a year or of two.

My observations on the religious tolerance preached by Islam might bring to the minds of many of my friends here, something that they might have read of religious wars in

¹ "And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes—you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who ponder." "Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord submissively. There comes forth from within it a beverage of many colours, in which there is healing for men; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect" (Qur-án, xvi. 67, 69).

² Muhammad said: "The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male or female. Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God; . . . knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lightens the way to heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude; it guides us to happiness; . . . with knowledge, the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next. It sustains us in misery; it is an ornament among friends and an armour against enemies." "He who leaves home in search of knowledge, walks in the path of Allah." "To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of science is better than religious exercises."

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Islam. Islam has suffered from gross misrepresentation in many things, and this is one of them. But before I come to this aspect of the question, I wish to say a few words. Now the use of the sword is sometimes a necessity, and has been resorted to, to this day, since the time of Cain and Abel. It has had its use and abuse. The unsheathing of the sword is admittedly indispensable under certain contingencies and circumstances, in the interest of honour, life and property. We have to wage war even to establish peace. The Prince of Peace, with all his humanitarian visions, as portrayed by him in his Sermon on the Mount, had to ask his disciples to sell their clothes to purchase swords. He also said that he had come to send fire and sword into the world, but a favourable occasion, perhaps, did not come to him to put his words to practice, nor could he find time to point out the right occasion when to use "fire and sword." The rest of the Bible, too, is not a good guide in this direction. We read something of the sword in the Scriptures, but it, though drawn under the sanction of Jehovah, hardly does any credit to its authors, or to God Himself. We look in vain to other religions and civilizations for any light on this subject. The Message of Islam came to solve the problem. It condemned wars and fighting for the purpose of achieving political ends or further conquests. It prescribed the following three occasions when the unsheathing of the sword is declared a necessity: (1) To restore peace and order and defend life and property, the sword to be sheathed if the enemy desists from fighting. (2) To establish religious freedom, so that each and every person may be at liberty to exercise freely his individual judgment and have his own opinion in religious matters. (3) To protect the Houses of God, irrespective of their religion.¹

¹ "And were it not for Allah's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder" (Qur-ân, ii. 251). "And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and

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The above will explain the reasons that brought the martial spirit of the Holy Prophet into play. Volumes have been written by adversaries on the subject, but it will not take more than a minute or two to expose the absurdity of their contentions. Muhammad, after being persecuted cruelly by his enemies in Mecca for full thirteen years, fled to Medina for his life. But the enemy would not leave him alone even there; they pursued him. The locality of the first three battles between the enemy and the Holy Prophet will show that Muhammad was on the defensive, and that the offensive was taken by the Meccans. Badr, the first place of battle, is about 120 miles from Mecca and 30 miles from Medina.

do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits" (Qur-án, ii. 190). "And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out, and persecution is severer than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the sacred mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight with you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers" (Qur-án, ii. 191). "But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur-án, ii. 192). "And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should only be for Allah; but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors" (Qur-án, ii. 193).

To kill the enemy wherever one finds him is nothing strange when a state of war exists. The words "and kill them wherever you find them" speaks of those who had commenced fighting and were carrying on hostilities against the Muslims. Further, the admonition "if they desist, there should be no hostility" explains the whole situation. Verse 193, in the above, clearly establishes that all hostilities should come to an end, when "religion should be only for Allah," and complete religious freedom becomes established.

"Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them" (Qur-án, xxii. 39). "Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty" (Qur-án, xxii. 39, 40).

A Muslim is bound to wage war in order to protect even the places of worship of other religions.

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Ohud, where the second battle was fought, stands 138 miles from Mecca and 12 miles from Medina. In the third battle 10,000 enemies came from Mecca and besieged Medina. Muhammad was victorious in all three battles. Then the state of war began, and the offensive and defensive was taken by both parties. Pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the Pillars of Faith in Islam, but the Meccans would not allow the Muslims to make the pilgrimage, although the Prophet asked them to do so in a most peaceful way. Muhammad at last went with 10,000 followers to Mecca, and an event, unique in the history of the world, occurred, for then it was that peace, order and religious freedom became established in Arabia, without shedding one drop of blood. This event furnished a most opportune occasion to Muhammad, for the exhibition of a nobility of soul, the equal of which history cannot find in the life of either prophet or warrior. Every enemy was forgiven; nothing was demanded from them, even in the form of indemnity; they were given the best treatment, and all clemency and kindness was shown to them.

Among his other reforms, Muhammad prohibited gambling and all intoxicants, and to-day nearly 300,000,000 of the human race have become purged of the evil, which is the curse of the non-Muslim world.

The Qur-án declared that the soul in man did not descend from some other world or planet, but arose from within the body and got its food from the latter; consequently a sound mind and sound spirit spring from a sound body. For this reason, certain food and drink was prohibited, and the observances of hygienic laws was made a religious duty. The purification of the body was declared to be a religious duty. We marvel at all this, when we find that the Holy Prophet of Islam was commanding these hygienic practices at a time in history when physical purification was under a religious ban in Christendom and elsewhere. To keep the body dirty and

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filthy was, at that time, in the West, a sign of devotion to God. Through the Crusades, Christians learned the use of the bath from Muslims. Spain, under the Moors, had thousands of public baths, when a bathroom was a scarcity, even in a Christian private house. All public baths in Spain were destroyed when the Christian rule was restored there. A Muslim has to take a bath regularly. He has to purify himself after natural functions ; he makes ablutions, washing his hands, mouth and the extremities of his body, before he goes to prayers, five times a day. It is not a piece of ritualism or a formal purity ; the washing of extremities refreshes both mind and soul and prepares man for spiritual purity. A Muslim must keep his house in a clean condition and remove every kind of filth from his environment under the Qur-ánic injunctions : “ And your garments purify ; and shun uncleanness.”¹ “ O you who believe, when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads, and (wash) your feet to the ankles ; and if you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash (yourselves) ; and if you are sick or on a journey, or you have touched the women, or you come from the cabinet and cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith ; Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful.”²

Muhammad laid down principles which will create happiness in the family,³ and good citizenship in society. As to the stemming of evil and the cultivation of virtue, it must be admitted that he was not the first to denounce the former and advocate the latter, but one thing is unique in his Message. It goes through the whole series of moralities and immoralities.

¹ Qur-án, lxxiv. 4, 5.

² *Ibid.*, v. 6.

³ See Appendix III.

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It evolves a system and prescribes limits which will enable virtue to thrive and make evil an exile.

A word more, and I shall have to thank you for the kind and courteous patience with which you have given me a hearing. The Message of Islam is in one respect unique among all such Messages as came from the Lord, from time to time, before it. It is authentic, and its genuineness is admitted by friends and foes. It is complete and meets all the ups and downs of life. Its main object is to raise man from the animal to the borders of the Divine, and to subliminate low passions into high morality and spirituality. It saves the human boat tossing on the waves of evil inclination and animal emotions, which will carry it to shipwreck, and brings it, in the long run, to the Divine harbour. It gives landmarks, and points to lighthouses, while warning us against shoals, reefs and whirlpools in our earthly voyage.

Lust and anger, the Qur-án says, are the root passions, in their natural condition. They should not be killed, as suggested by some other religious systems, for they are the bed-rock of the spiritual edifice. The Book lays down rules whereby, out of them, may be evolved such ethics and religion as shall clothe us in the Divine garb. Anger, the Book says, has its righteous use, and so has lust, when they are refined, so as to assume their noble form. Anger, when reformed, becomes justice, forgiveness and chastisement, bravery, courage, high-mindedness, seriousness and serenity of mind, tolerance, meekness, magnanimity, patience, perseverance, pertinacity of character, while the same passion in its mean form becomes malice, hatred, enmity, revenge, hot temper, hastiness, pride, rashness, recklessness, foolhardiness, stubbornness, timidity, cowardice and so forth. Lust, on the other hand, in its undesirable shape, is avarice, jealousy, ambition, contempt, niggardliness, the condoning of evil, selfishness, self-assertiveness, extravagance, debauchery, vanity and

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flattery ; while the same lust appears in a commendable form as love, devotion, selflessness, mercy, compassion, chastity, generosity, sacrifice, trustworthiness. This brief description, which I have given, of the two families of the root passions, is by no means exhaustive. Moreover, some of the above-mentioned virtues and vices result also from the combination of the root passions. And wisdom plays a great part in the moulding of human character. It, in itself, when properly cultivated, produces reason, logic, thoughtfulness, reflection, discretion, foresightedness and good judgment. All this furniture of human consciousness and character has been amply dealt with in the Qur-án, which gives a plain direction to guide us in the right path.

The last Message of God has yet another beauty, and unique. This is its practical side, which received its full illustration in the life of the Holy Prophet. His life and his actions form a complete commentary on the Message. He fulfilled every Qur-ánic injunction, and moulded his life under its guidance. We fail to see this in the life of his predecessors in Divine Messengership. It may be that they were not blessed with occasions for bringing out the good that was in them ; or perhaps they did so and their historians failed to record all that they said and did. In fact, Muhammad is the only historic prophet, of whose life we possess the full narrative. Muhammad appears before us as a child, a youth, a middle-aged man and an old man, a son, a brother, a father, a husband and a neighbour, a man in penury and affluence, a camel-driver and the leader of humanity, a cruelly persecuted person and a victor, a refugee and a conqueror, a trader, a soldier, a commander of an army, a judge and a ruler. Variegated as these aspects of life are, Muhammad is the same man in adversity and prosperity, unchangeable and unchanged ; manifesting the best of virtues as occasion needed, and pursuing always the lines marked out for human progress in the Qur-án. It is a

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matter for wonder that, with all our complete knowledge of him, we find very little in him to carp at. The more you know of him, the more you love him. He is an assemblage of virtues and possesses everything desired by a noble heart. God knows better what would have been our judgment on the other great men of the world, secular or religious, if we knew more of them. Muhammad, of course, is not without his defamers, but his private character, as a man, is decidedly above reproach. All that has been said by his adverse critics concerns what he preached in pursuance of some principle. You cannot cast any reflection on his character, if the principle itself cannot be impeached. If, for instance, the use of the sword, on the occasions just explained, admits of no picking of holes, no one can reasonably say anything against Muhammad, if he appeared as a warrior. He never fought for the propagation of faith. Such a thing is not once mentioned in the Qur-án, and is solely the product of the inventive brains of Christian missionaries.

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APPENDIX I

THE RELIGION OF NATURE

Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men ; there is no altering of Allah's creation : that is the right religion, but most people do not know.—Qur-án, xxx. 30.

THESE sacred words sum up the religion of man. They give quite a new conception of it. They neither speak of prayers nor of offerings nor of sacrifice. To please God or appease an angered Deity, or to create reconciliation between the Creator and the created are not the objectives of religion as set forth in the above quotation. It speaks of something quite different. It refers to our own nature and its various latent constituents. To work them out is our objective, and the way to work them out is the religion revealed to man from the Most High.

The religion of man is the religion of everything in nature, from nebulae to the material world, and from the material world up to humanity. Matter in its various combinations seems to possess inherent properties at each stage of its evolution. It awaits favourable circumstances and assimilates material necessary for its environment, to work out the wonderful things treasured in them. The light from a glow-worm through various specializations evolves into an electric arc. The noise of a cricket is developed into melodious music. A seed becomes a full-grown tree with flowers and fruit. In short, everything in Nature is a treasure-house of probabilities and possibilities. Each generation of science enriches our knowledge concerning the properties of things, and these seem

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to be inexhaustible. Should not we think the same of man ? After all, a genital seed is only a drop of water, but if we go a little further to spermatic conditions, it is of microscopic size, and that tiny thing, invisible to the human eye, contains within itself human flesh, bones, limbs, brain, consciousness, mind, and soul. If sperma has travelled up to the condition of a full-grown man, on the physical plane, it cannot be supposed to have reached its entelechy, especially when the human frame seems to possess consciousness and mind of an unimaginable growth. If every other thing in Nature is on its way to development, and must inevitably work out everything latent in it, man must come under the same rule. He is, in himself, a world—the universe in miniature. Everything in Nature became located in him and must work out its inherent qualities. If seminal matter, or a clot of blood, the second embryonic stage of the seed, becomes evolved into a frame so wonderful as that of man, in whom matter reaches the climax of its physical growth, the same clot must bring its mental, moral, and spiritual capacities to consummation also.

Physical growth, in every organism, progresses automatically. Every organic system possesses a sort of constructive ability that assimilates anything and everything that is beneficial to the growth of the said organism, and rejects all that is harmful. The whole atmosphere contains food for everything in the earth. The bowels of the earth, similarly, provide universal nourishment, but what is useful for the growth of one organism may be harmful to the other ; nevertheless, the material for world-nourishment is a mixed mass and more or less the same. An orchard contains different trees. They receive the same sunshine ; they are irrigated with the same water ; they are enveloped in the same atmosphere ; and the same area of land provides them with the food they have to receive from the bowels of the earth. Yet they differ in shape, form, foliage, flower, and fruit. Fruits, in their turn, differ in taste, aroma,

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and properties. It is this same constructive ability that differentiates between the friend and the foe. It accepts from the common food that which is favourable to its growth and rejects what is baneful. The same working goes on in the human frame in its physical development. The stomach assimilates profitable things, and spurns those that are harmful ; and if a diseased stomach cannot perform its function properly, it means disease. Disease is only the remonstrance of human nature against the presence of some foreign element in the system, and medical aid comes to clear the system of the undesirable matter by means of purgatives and surgical operations. The working of this constructive ability in our body is automatic. It is regular and systematic in its ways, but we seem to possess no such constructive ability for our mental, moral, and spiritual growth. We are decidedly inordinate in this respect ; rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, get the same physical growth everywhere. It is a general rule ; stunted or defective physical growth is an exception. But mental, moral, and spiritual growth is not automatic or universal. It needs special instruction and guidance. This universal observation shows that we lack constructive ability on the spiritual plane. The clot of blood in the womb progresses unconsciously, but when it gives birth to consciousness which is to develop when man enters into the world—because that seems to be the main object of his coming to life—he does not possess inherent faculties to go on the right lines. He is *inordinate* in this respect. The very first message which came to Muhammad, the Teacher of Islam, when the mantle of prophethood fell on his shoulders, disclosed this great truth. It revealed that, if the seminal use could be evolved into such an honoured form, that, by its action, material progress can reach its consummation in the human frame, the same end can be attained in the progress of his consciousness ; but he is *inordinate* in this respect. He needs guidance, and God intends

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that he should. The first message, which I have mentioned, came in the following words: "Read in the Name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most honourable, Who taught (to write) with the pen, Taught man what he knew not. Nay! man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want." ¹

What a truism, "Man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want." As long as his agency is not needed in his growth on the physical plane, he is taken for granted; but as soon as the question actually arises, his judgment and volition, if untutored, show inordinacy at each step.

Human consciousness is, indeed, a wonderful creation—a new creation, as the Qur-án says: "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small life-germ in a firm-resting place, then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation." It is a collection of all animal consciousness—the dog, the cat, the tiger, the wolf, the cow, the lamb, the birds, the denizens of the sea have all been placed within the four walls of human consciousness; hence his lower passions. Whichever animal passion gets the better of his judgment converts him into that particular animal. His body is a moving zoo, but he is the keeper of the zoo, and he needs knowledge to control his animals and to make use of them with propriety. We need a religion which may enable us to tame all these animals (that is to say, our carnal passions) and make proper use of them.

Human consciousness has a variety of sides—active, emotional, mental, social, moral, ethical, spiritual, occult, and the rest. They are all gifts of God, and have their respective parts to play in the moulding of human character. In an evolved

¹ Qur-án, xcvi. 1-3.

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soul, the human heart creates a sort of commonwealth in which every side of human consciousness is looked after, every human passion is given fair play, and every craving of Nature is satisfied in a way complementary to, and not at the expense of, the other furniture of the heart. Religion comes to help us in this respect. God is the Creator of our nature. He has placed in us innumerable things. Everything in Nature is potentially perfect, and so must man be. But as every other thing reaches its perfection in the course of time, so must man. The whole work of God in creating a being like man, will come to nothing if all his potentialities do not come to actuality. The object of the creation of our species would be nullified if we could not bring to the surface what is inherently reposed in us. Explore the various seams and recesses of your heart and see what enormous probabilities and possibilities we possess. Are they to remain dormant? Is there no way to bring them out? To think so is blasphemy. It is to pick holes in God's wisdom. What an invaluable treasure has science bestowed upon us. Everything that to-day is contributing towards our comfort and civilization has always existed in the creation of the Lord. It was created to minister to our needs, but ignorance stood between us and their utility. Knowledge and application have reaped us an inestimable harvest. It came within our reach through the cultivation of the mental side of our nature. The brute in man made healthy societies and governments when the social side of Nature was worked on right lines. What a millennium awaits us when the hitherto undeveloped sides of human nature come out as they really are. The last few years have given an insight into some occult things concerning man to materialistic Western minds. People have become disgusted with traditional theology in the West. Vacant pews and empty churches speak louder than human words against the inefficiency of the dogmatized faith. The Western mind has become awakened to finding out ways for self-realization. But

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the history of modern culture will show them that man, if left without Divine Light, is always *inordinate*. Modern science, which can mainly be credited with our present culture, did not come within human reach before Islam. The Qur-án came to give impetus to modern culture. It declared man the Lord of the Universe and vicegerent of God on earth.¹ It declared that everything in the world was created to minister to human needs. The Book also showed the way to reduce Nature to human service. Thus Divine Revelation came to guide us to our material progress. If we investigate the genesis of the laws of morality and ethics that at present govern human society, we shall find again Divine Revelation as the origin. In short, religion from God comes to work out our nature to its perfection, as the Qur-án says: "Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation: that is the right religion, but most people do not know."

Any cult, creed or persuasion that does not rise to such a level through its doctrines and tenets, is only a species of fetishism and unworthy of being called a religion from God.

¹ And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it), they said: What! wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know (Qur-án, ii. 30).

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OUR IDEALS IN THE UNIVERSE

WE seek ideals because we need them ; they have been supplied to us by our Teachers, and Al-Qur-án also speaks of the lives of great Prophets, for the same purpose, placing them before us as exemplars. But the Book also draws our attention to some of " the mighty atoms " in the universe that do the greatest good.

Man was created from the essence of the earth.¹ He has assembled in him everything that lies in it. But the earth itself has come out of the sun, bringing with it everything in that great luminary ; thus every furniture of the solar system has become transferred to and located in our frame, with all their capabilities, in an epitomized form. Man is therefore supposed to work out all that is performed by the various manifestations of Nature ; but with one difference, which is, the diversity of the function arising from the diverse nature of the planes to which other things belong. Man has been given consciousness and soul to an extent denied to others. In fact, all that lies in the rest of the universe, in its gross form, becomes refined through various evolutionary stages, into emotions, thoughts and ideation. Consequently, he has to exhibit these in mental, moral and spiritual aspects, as is done by Nature on the physical plane. I alluded to this in my principal lecture. He belongs to the moral order, and should move in the spiritual sphere.

The great truth was preached to man in Chapter XCI of

¹ The Qur-án, xxiii. 12.

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the Qur-án in the following words: "Consider the sun and his light." "And the moon when she borrows light from him." "And the day when it exposes it to view." "And the night when it draws a veil over it." "And the heaven and its make." "And the earth and its extension." "And the soul and its perfection." "So He intimated to it by inspiration its deviating from truth and its guarding (against evil)." "He will indeed be successful who purifies it." "And he will fail who corrupts it."†

An evolved soul must bring, like the sun, life and light to others; he must bring them out of the darkness of ignorance, impiety and irreligiousness. He must energize those in lassitude, nerve them up and cleanse the world of all that is impure. Most of us, of course, do not possess this inherent light; we must borrow it (like the moon from the sun) from those more favoured—those great men, who received the Light directly from God and appeared at times when the whole horizon of the world had become darkened. We should enlighten the world when those great luminaries of Divine Love pass away, just as the moon does when the sun disappears. She ripens crops and creates sweetness in fruits, while the sun nourishes them in other ways. Similarly, we should help to bring the intellect and wisdom of others to the maturity which got its inception and growth from the Divine luminaries.

The above sacred quotation also speaks of the "day when it exposes it to view and the night when it draws a veil over it." Man, like the day, should arouse others from the drowsiness of inactivity and inertia. He should put them to work, and invigorate them against despondency, hopelessness and fear. He should infuse a new spirit into the world. When his fellow-men become tired and fatigued, he should approach them, as if with the wings of night, to give them rest and

† The Qur-án, xci. 1-10.

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comfort. If his inspiration brings the latent faculties of others into operation, his kind words and deeds, like the hours of the night, should refresh them and enable them to continue their work with a new spirit, and apply themselves to new avenues of exertion.

The sacred verses again draw our attention to the heaven and the earth : " And the heaven and its make, and the earth and its extension." Heaven and all the luminaries in it continually shed their light, which, piercing through space, goes into the earth, carrying into it all that lies in the firmament—the earth¹ thus becoming pregnant by the forces from on high and bringing forth its treasures for our use. Let man, like the sky, fill others' minds with the seeds of new and healthy ideas, and inspire them with useful thoughts and righteous aspirations. He should also act as the earth, and pour out things for others' good. He should fit himself to receive Light from the Most High, and thus enable himself to produce that which his Lord intends him to do in the service of humanity ; he will lose nothing thereby. Hoards of wealth come from the recesses of the earth, every minute sees a renewal of its blessings, yet it diminishes never. Man, her best child, should follow his mother, Nature.

That man is capable of being a true representative of all that is in the firmament and the earth, as embodying *in giving*, on the mental plane, what they do on the physical plane, is shown in the following verses : " And the soul and its perfection, so He intimated to it by inspiration, its deviating from truth and its guarding (against) evil. He (man) will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it."

The human soul, when balanced and perfect, can do every-

¹ " And the bearer of witness and those against whom the witness is borne." " Surely the might of your Lord is great." " Surely it is He Who originates and reproduces " (The Qur-án, lxxxv. 3, 12 and 13).

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thing that is done by the rest of Nature. He has something else, not given to the rest of the universe—judgment and discretion. But the judgment may err and the discretion go wrong. To avoid such a catastrophe, revelation came to guide him in the right path. He was informed of his evil inclinations, and to him was suggested a course whereby he might guard against it. His success lies in the use of his faculties on the lines adopted by the heavens and the earth, and his failure consists in stunting his faculties.

The chapter under discussion, in its conclusion, compares man also with a she-camel : “ So Allah’s apostle said to them, (leave alone) Allah’s she-camel, and (give) her drink. But they called him a liar and slaughtered her, therefore their Lord crushed them for their sins and levelled them (with the ground). And he fears not its consequences.” The she-camel is a most useful animal to man, while she costs her owner nothing ; she carries him to places where other means of conveyance fail ; he can live on her milk, when he gets nothing for sustenance. Her wool supplies him garments and her skin makes him a lodging. In waterless deserts, when he is dying of thirst, she gives her life under his scabbard to supply him with water which she has stored in her hump. And with all this, she is no burden on her owner. She lives on thorns and prickly things which she finds herself in the desert. Man, at least, should imitate her in her usefulness. He should not be a burden on any ; and everything in him should go to serve and benefit others. His soul is the she-camel of God. He must give her to drink from the water of God—Revelation. The word of God is her food, but through our inordinacy, we starve the soul, and in the end, kill the divine she-camel. We stand unworthy of living in the judgment of the Lord, and so we are destroyed.

Nations rise and fall. The secret of it all lies in the above lines. The government of the world is given to those who

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rule for the benefit of the ruled, and do not make it a pretext for self-indulgence at the expense of others. Every nation has had its day ; it has thriven and flourished and continued in prosperity, as long as it was of some benefit to others, in the eye of the Lord. But success and affluence made it selfish and self-assertive ; it increased in extravagance and became a burden on others ; it began to exploit its fellow-beings, and devised means for weakening them so that they might be powerless to resist. It increased in persecution and oppression, and reduced others to slavery. Then the Lord God, the Creator and Protector of all men, came with vengeance, and that nation became one of the lost. Here is a lesson for those in power at present. The ways of the Lord are unchangeable and the laws of His government are to-day the same as on the day when man first saw the light.

APPENDIX III

WOMAN IN ISLAM¹

BEFORE Islam, Woman was treated as a chattel. No religion or civilization has as yet raised her to the status that should have been her birthright. She was regarded as an evil but necessary appendage, and she received the worst treatment of all from Christianity. The story of the Temptation in the Book of Genesis, and the basic principle of the Church creed taken therefrom, damaged her position tremendously.

In dealing with the status of Woman, Islam and Christianity stand poles apart. The one has raised her from the lowest possible depths to a level equal to that of man, at a time when her degradation knew no limit; the other thrust her back to thralldom at a time when she was beginning to emerge from it under Roman civilization. This civilization was struggling to raise her status, when Christianity came like an icy blast, and nipped the efforts in the very bud. The statement, though historically accurate, will surprise many amongst those who are accustomed to listen to the very different story told by Christian writers. But if even Jesus does not seem to concern himself about the female sex, and if those who immediately followed him—and have since been looked upon as the builders of the Church, and filled with the Holy Ghost—did nothing to improve her condition, while their words and actions brought every odium on her; and if Christian States have continued this treatment for centuries, and, indeed, until recent

¹ An extract from my book, *The Ideal Prophet*.

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days, when Woman began to assert herself, how can they declare that Christianity brought an honourable position to Woman?

The Hebrew Law was unfavourable to her. The Divine command, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," had the effect of reducing her to the position of a chattel in the house, and so she was, in Judaic society. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Jesus did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Whenever something appeared to him as an abuse of the Law, he expressed his disapproval of it, and tried to reform it. But in the case of Woman his silence shows that the idea of ameliorating her lot never occurred to him; though the self-indulgence of his tribe was peculiarly damaging to womankind.

If Paganism supplied the idea of a suffering Deity and of a crucified Saviour, and the sad event in the life of Jesus favoured their incorporation with Christianity, the legends of the Temptation in Genesis served as a beautiful connecting link between the two. It inspired the story of the Fall of Adam, and through him, the fall of the human race—a theory absolutely, and now admittedly, unknown to the Jews, but initiated by the writers of the Pauline literature to strengthen and explain the Pagan theory of redemption through blood. To that extent it acted well, but it was of no service to Woman. The whole blame of human perdition, by reason of this first sin, was laid at her door: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." Woman consequently could not be in the good books of those who took these expressions as the Word of God and believed in the theory of the Fall of Adam. This explains the cruel attitude which the Early Fathers and the real builders of the Church adopted towards Woman, following, as they did, in the footsteps of St. Paul. In fact, her disgrace at the hands of these Fathers was the true and logical sequel to the Christian beliefs,

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of which the following is an illustration: "Do you know," says Tertullian, when addressing Women, "that you are each Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt, of necessity, must live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that tree; you are the first deserter of the Divine Law; you destroyed as easily God's image."

The Christian apologist of modern culture, while he sees in it mediæval savagery and wantonness, cannot rationally deny that "the pious aspersions" of the Fathers were not without justification. The logic was simple and true. If it was believed that sin was a heritage and eternal condemnation its price—and so it is believed till to-day—then eternal condemnation has come through Woman; she opened the door of all human sufferings. She is "the organ of the devil," "a scorpion ever ready to sting," "the poisonous asp," "the malice of the dragon." These are some of the blessings that Woman received from persons of exalted position in the Church, such as St. Bernard, St. Anthony, St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Paul, who seem to me to be at the bottom of it. His personal¹ grudge against the sex, in consequence of his suit being rejected by a Jewish young woman, the high priest's daughter, perhaps, was responsible for it. Say what you will, if "sin in nature" is the foundation-stone of the sacramental religion, which Christianity has become—the principles of atonement and of the divinity of Christ are mere corollaries of it, then Woman deserves all that has been said by these Fathers. Present-day culture may not tolerate it, but her real redemption lies only in exposing the falsity of these beliefs. And was not the Holy Prophet, even on this very point, the real benefactor of Woman, seeing that he gave the lie to this crude theology, and took exception to the theory of sin in nature? He declared that every child was born

¹ Epiph. *Hæ.*, xxx. 16, p. 14. *Islamic Review*, vol. xii, p. 232.

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sinless, and that in the case of the Temptation, man and woman were not respectively the tempted and the tempter, but both of them equally suffered and were equally deceived by the evil agency.

Just at the time when the Christian Church was so outrageously trampling on womanhood, and the rest of the world was treating her no less cruelly, Muhammad came to save the situation. He raised Woman to such a height as she had never dreamed of before—a height which leaves her nothing higher for which to strive.

While the Christian Fathers were harping on the slogan that woman was made for man and not man for woman, Muhammad told the world that woman was the twin-half of man, in commenting upon the Qur-ánic verse, that revealed in the following words the great truth that man and woman had come from the same essence and were one and the same in that respect: "O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you." The Qur-án gave the name of *mohsina* to Woman, which meant that she was neither the "organ of the devil" nor his gateway, but a *rocky fortress against Satan*, a lighthouse of virtue and continence that alone can save man from shipwreck while tossing among the stormy waves of passion. The Bible says: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," but Muhammad says: "Woman is the sovereign of your house." St. Paul may say: "Let the woman learn in silence, without subjection, for I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"; but the Qur-án contradicts him when it says: "Woman has like rights with those of man—the same is due to her as is

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due from her." She is not "a scorpion ever ready to sting," but "a garment of man as he is her garment" ¹; she is not the "instrument of iniquity," as these Christian Fathers call her, but, in the words of the Qur-án,² a fountain of love and affection. Let Jesus say to his mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"—put whatever construction you like on these words and come with any explanation you please, people in Christendom even to-day reflect this utterance of their Master in their actions—the affluence of sons go hand in hand with the indigence of mothers in the West—mothers are discarded and disregarded—but a Muslim leaves no effort undone to pay all respect and reverence to his mother, because his Prophet Muhammad tells him: "Paradise lies at the feet of a mother." Happy marriage may be a lottery in the West, as some assert, but it makes a wife, in a Muslim house, the dearest of friends, a counterpart of man susceptible to all healthy and salutary influences. It could not well be otherwise, seeing that we are bound to obey the Master who says: "The best of you are they who behave best to their wives." Again he says: "The best of you before God and His creation are those who are best in their own families, and I am the best to my family."

"One of the disciples inquired of the Apostle as to what treatment should be meted out to a wife. He answered: 'Give her to eat when you eat yourself, and clothe her when you clothe yourself; and do not slap her on the face nor abuse her, nor separate yourself from her in displeasure.'"

"Give your wife good counsel, and do not beat your noble wife like a slave."

"Admonish your wives with kindness."

"A Muslim must not hate his wife; and if he be displeased with one bad quality in her, then let him be pleased with another which is good."

¹ Qur-án, ii. 187.

² *Ibid.*, xxx. 21.

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Just a quarter of a century after the time when the council of Christian Fathers at Meccan were discussing whether any female could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and with great difficulty they had come to the conclusion that she might enter into Paradise, but that she would have to be sexless, the Qur-án brought the gospel to her in the following words :—

“ Enter into Paradise, ye and your wives delighted.”

“ But whoso doth the things that are right, whether the male or female, and is a believer, whether male or female, they shall enter into Paradise.”

“ Whoso doth that which is right, whether male or female, him or her will we quicken to happy life.”

When the world was doubtful whether any spiritual advancement was open to Woman at all, the Qur-án taught the following : “ Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember—Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.”¹ It is only utter ignorance of Islam and blind prejudice against it that comes to the surface when our adverse critics assert that Woman, under Islam, does not possess a soul. It hardly needs any elaborate discussion to refute this piece of foolhardiness. If a Man possesses a soul, Woman must possess one also, seeing that both are, according to the teaching of the Qur-án, of the same essence.

¹ Qur-án, xxxiii. 35.

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MARRIAGE ENNOBLED

Muhammad gave a new and noble meaning to the institution of marriage. He sanctified it by making it a channel for the working out of high morality and for developing that germ ¹ of love and compassion which is embedded in the human breast. The spirit of sacrifice is the backbone of all noble passions; and marriage gives a natural impetus to it, and brings it to the surface. After marriage, man and woman live for each other and for their children. They make every sort of sacrifice for their comfort. Thus family life widens the heart and broadens the consciousness. We learn to feel and do for others as we do for ourselves, and the greater the number of the family, the more occasion there is for this sort of moral discipline. I am inclined to think that polygamy, if carried on in strict observance of the Muslim Law, would be a great help towards that end, though it must needs entail many troubles and hardships. For a man to be equal in his love and in his treatment towards his several wives, is a tremendous task of an arduous nature, and if a person succeeds, he is certainly not an average person. But if he is unable to do so, he commits sin,² under the Qur-án, if he takes more than one wife. And in this respect, Muhammad again proves an ideal personality. None of his wives had any complaint of his being partial to another. He was, on the other hand, surprisingly impartial in his treatment of all of them. And there is nothing carnal in the fact of his having so many wives. His was a most abstemious life of starvation and want—a life which could hardly have aroused passions. He was in the prime of his life when he married first, a widow of forty years. He did not take another wife until the Lady Khadija, his first wife, died. He was then fifty-two years of age. Then he married a virgin, the Lady Ayesha. At this time he was

¹ Qur-án, xxx. 21.

² *Ibid.*, iv.

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compelled to wage war against his enemies, which thinned the ranks of his friends, who gave their lives for him, leaving behind widows, who surely needed shelter and protection. Then it was that the law of polygamy was promulgated, to meet this necessity ; neither should it be forgotten that most of the widows who came under the protection of the Prophet as his wives had passed the age of connubial relations. There was no question of desire or of the flesh in these marriages. Rather, it created an occasion for the Prophet to show that a woman who possesses no personal charms has an equal claim on, and should receive an equal share of, all the regard and consideration of the husband—even if he be the husband of some handsome woman.

POLYGAMY

Monogamy should not be taken as a Christian verity. Polygamy was in vogue in Christendom only a few centuries ago, not only among the laity, but the clergy also. Every other religion and civilization has allowed it. Jesus undoubtedly was not himself a lawgiver, and did not say anything on the subject. But he followed the Mosaic law and was insistent on its observance. The law and practice of the house of Jacob encouraged polygamy, and that to an extent which must sound fantastic to a modern mind, seeing that a patriarch among the Israelites could afford to bring five hundred wives under his roof. Jesus tried, among other things, to reform the self-indulgence of his tribe, but polygamy did not occur to him as a matter for reformation, though freely practised by his own people. Monogamy was first made a matter of legislation in the West by the Emperor Justinian, a Roman and a pagan Jurist, but, like many other Roman virtues, it became something of a back number for many centuries under the onslaughts of Christianity.

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Islam came to reform the abuses of the world at large, and took notice of polygamy as well. It brought it under drastic restrictions, and made it next to an impossibility in ordinary cases. The institution, as such, was not without its use under special circumstances. A house with no children is a graveyard. The first marriage may prove barren for years, and if the wife is responsible for the misfortune, a second marriage would be the only thing possible in the case of those whose happiness remains incomplete without children. In India, such marriages take place often at the instance of the first wife herself. It was to meet such contingencies of an exceptional character that polygamy received countenance in Islam. If the females sometimes outnumber the males—and this occurs in and after a period of war—it furnishes another argument for bringing more than one wife under one roof, to ward off evil in its most heinous form. It was in the days of wars, when the number of women had increased in Medina, that the Qur-*ánic* verses allowing polygamy under certain restrictions were revealed. The sexual instinct is, after all, a life tendency, and cannot become extinct. The curbing of the passions is unhealthy, and the institution of celibacy has always and everywhere created a spirit of moral leprosy. Men and women are entitled, under the demands of Nature, to claim companionship of each other in lawful wedlock, but promiscuous intermixture is pernicious to society. Is not polygamy—carried on, of course, with Muslim restriction—the only remedy under such circumstances? We do not advocate it—we resort to it only by way of remedy; and Islam can dispense with it without affecting its tenets.

Europe has, since the war, been facing the same problem. The war has left women outnumbering men in the West to an appalling extent. Unmarried life is unnatural and unhealthy. It is a sin, if sin means anything and everything that is damaging to human progress.

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But has Christendom been purged of polygamy? Marriage, in its bald form, is after all a connection of man and woman. Our interest in the coming generation and the consciousness of paternity gives sanctity to the institution of marriage. Take it in its initial form, and the Christian in the West would appear to be more of a polygamist than the Muslim anywhere. The latter, in very rare cases (and, moreover, in a legalized form), does that which the former does unscrupulously and in an illegal form. But what an irony of fate! The former action, so healthy in its consequences, is branded as an offence which the law calls "bigamy"; while the latter, so flagrant and shameless in its methods, is practised with impunity, and the law takes no cognizance of it. Legislation should not succumb to sentimentality; its mission should be the betterment of human society, and to contribute to the happiness of that society. There are two evils which the world, from the beginning, has never been able to remedy—the uncontrolled brutality of man when under the excitement of his passions, and the weakness of a woman when she has become a victim thereto; and what is the result? Bastardy for the child; misery and shame for the mother. Has religion or civilization, in this matter, schemed out anything to remedy this double evil? Muslim lands are free from it. Why should the innocent children, who were not consulted by their parents as to their being brought into this world to a life of infamy, be debarred from inheriting the name and property of their fathers? England had, in a manner, to recognize "war babies," and thus give indirect countenance to polygamy. But that was a temporary measure. Humanitarian principles have come forward to provide "Houses of Rescue" and "Foundling Hospitals" to save these innocent victims of human depravity from misery and indigence, but what about the ignominy that stigmatizes their whole life and leaves their mothers in the lurch? Could they not have been saved

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from all this, if the mothers had been allowed by the law to hold the honourable position of a second wife, where the first marriage, for various reasons, could not accomplish the matrimonial purpose?

Polygamy was observed indiscriminately before Islam, as I said before, and there was no restriction as to the number of a man's wives. He could have as many as he wished. Islam regulated the number if special circumstances did unavoidably necessitate plurality of wives. There are certain contingencies in life where polygamy alone can check incontinence. The Muslim conception of evil is very vast. Islam regards it from various angles, and one of them is the hygienic angle. In connubial life, there arise occasions when man and woman should separate from each other for hygienic reasons. For instance, woman labours under certain disabilities, for a week, in every month. The days of pregnancy, and the time of suckling a child are further disabilities that would last at least for eighteen months. In the interest of the health of the child and of the mother, Islam strongly recommends that husband and wife should not share beds under these conditions. In this respect Muhammad advised us to exercise control over our passions, and suggested various ways which might help us, of which fasting was one. But in no case would he leave any loophole for misconduct. He would rather allow the husband to have the company of another wife than violate hygienic laws or pursue the course of incontinence; and if we observe these injunctions strictly, the number of wives will come to four.

A special correspondent of the *Daily Express* who visited Nottingham recently says: "It is estimated that there are four women to every man in a population of more than a quarter of a million. On this estimate there must be about 200,000 women and girls and only 50,000 men. Four girls to every man! It is an astonishing thought. Yet it is true.

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A walk around the crowded market and Long Row in the evening will convince the most unobservant stranger of this fact."

Referring to the beauty of the pretty girls of Nottingham, the correspondent says: "Nottingham is not the place for a susceptible married man. I am returning to London by the next train."

THE BISHOP OF PRETORIA ON OUR MESSAGE

IN the course of the Message, when speaking of formal Christianity, I laid stress on two points :—

(1) That the Biblical Scriptures, like the Revealed Word in other parts of the world, had become vitiated at the advent of Islam and the then condition of the world demanded a fresh Revelation.

(2) That the faith passed under the Name of Jesus was never taught by the great Nazarene, but that it was brought into the Christian Church from the Pagan world by the early builders of the said Church and the Mystery cult kept all its original features in the new garb.

As to the first point His Lordship, as far as I could see from his writing on the subject, admits the unauthenticity of the Biblical record in many places ; but it is asserted that truth could be gleaned out of the alloyed mass. I do not deny the possibility of the task. We are sometimes compelled to resort to such unnatural and unsafe means when natural ways become closed to us. Condensers are in requisition to get sweet water out of the impure and unhealthy mass in the ocean when the stock of pure water becomes exhausted on board ship. But under normal conditions no one cares for the ocean water at the time of the dearth ; we always look to heaven for a fresh supply. Should not the same Divine Law apply in the world of religion if religion is a Divine institution ? The Lord of Hosts always sent His Word afresh when

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the former one became vitiated. The history of every religion bears testimony to it. The same I find in the house of Jacob. God would not change His established ways after the advent of Jesus. In the fourth century of the Christian era, Revealed Books in every religion had lost their purity. Would, then, the Lord God suffer humanity to grope in the darkness? The truth as to the unreliable character of the Biblical record dawned upon the Western mind very recently. Would, then, the Source of all Light leave humanity on the path of misguidance for so many centuries? These are some of the salient points for the Bishop of Pretoria to consider. The ways of the Lord are unchangeable. He would do the same as He used to do before. He would send His Message afresh, when the former ones became adulterated; and the Qur-án came to serve the same end.

As to the other point, His Lordship admits the existence of a striking resemblance between Paganism and the Church religion, but he would not go so far as to accept the former as the origin of the latter. He would rather ascribe the identity between the two faiths to the similarity in the demands of the religious instinct in man, which was the same, the Bishop says, in the ancient and Christian world, and which found its satisfaction in the same way. I admire the ingenuity of the explanation, but it would involve an assumption that would conclude that Paganism was after all a truth and that the Lord of Christianity did not come with a new dispensation. The explanation, however, hardly holds water, on psychological data as well as in the light of established facts. I deal with both the aspects of His Lordship's argument in the following :—

We possess a variety of instincts which act as life-tendencies and create corresponding impulses, setting our activities to work and leading us to knowledge. In satisfying their demands,

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we develop our faculties. As, for instance, we give growth to our physical nature when we quench our hunger and thirst. In satisfying our sexual instinct, we not only propagate the species, but take preliminary steps towards bringing to prominence that germ of love and compassion which has been reposed in our nature. In like manner, all our knowledge is due to our cognative passions ; and every instinct in us, when responded to rightly, serves to develop the corresponding side of our nature.

We possess the religious instinct, which serves a similar object, and helps to raise a certain side of our human nature. Man is a worshipping animal. He adores beauty and loves the sublime ; he bows down before the Supreme Power. But his doing so must help his own growth in some way ; and that way consists in winning for himself that which inspires him to worship the object of his adoration. Lacking power ourselves, we bow down to One who possesses it. But the sense of subordination goads us to achieve the very thing for lack of which we are humble and submissive. Our capacity to possess a thing excites our admiration for those who actually do possess it. In the same way, if we worship God in response to our religious instinct, our worship must proceed on lines that may tend to create in us a semblance of deification ; otherwise all worship will be perfunctory. A cult or a creed, therefore, is unworthy of the name of religion if it does not help its votaries to achieve the same thing.

Religion, they say, came to show us the way to please the Lord. But His pleasure, as our Creator, must, surely, lie in the accomplishment of the object for which He created us ; and His displeasure is in the squandering and dissipation of our powers, otherwise our worship of Him is tantamount to fetishism.

The world was not without its religions before Islam, and each of those religions had the pleasure of God, in the above

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sense of the word, for its main object. They proposed certain beliefs and actions for the working out of human nature on Divine lines. In different accents they taught that man was made after the image of the Lord, and that revelation came as guidance, to fan the Divine flame reposed in him. But with the departure of their respective teachers came corruption, and those religions degenerated into cults of rituals or sacrament. Some saw their spiritual edification in "the cleaning of pots and washing of dishes"; others found their regeneration in "Baptism and Eucharistic meals."

Every religion that was followed by any race came originally from Divine sources. The kind and merciful God Who blessed man with so many physical boons would scarcely have neglected his spiritual requirements. If He equips us with various capacities, "It rests upon Allah to show the right way"¹ to their fulfilment. He creates² human capabilities, and would surely not leave man without some means of self-expression. Religion, in fact, came to guide us to self-realization. The same religion was given to every human race, though almost all other religions deny this human privilege to the followers of other persuasions. They claim Divine Revelation as the source of their religion, but they would not credit others with it. Like the Christian Church, they call the teachers of other religions impostors. Even Jesus has wrongly been reported in the Gospel according to St. John, to have styled the Divine forerunners as thieves,³ but Islam came with a salutary message in this respect. It declared

¹ And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways); and if He pleases He would certainly guide you all aright (Qur-án, xvi. 9).

² These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful (Qur-án, ii. 5).

We said: Go forth from this (state) all; so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve (Qur-án, ii. 38).

³ John x. 8.

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that every nation ¹ before the advent of Islam had its Prophet and Warner from God. But the vicissitudes of time cruelly affected the Divine Message, and the teachings of the Divine Messengers suffered in its purity. Religion everywhere became degraded into a cult of ritual and ceremonial or became a creed of sacraments. Just as Judaism became merged in a system of ceremonialism, under which the letter was preferred to the spirit, so the simple faith of Jesus gave way to a religion of sacraments of pagan origin, and the main object of religion—the unfolding of self—was lost sight of.

Ritualism and sacrament are not peculiar to Judaism and Christianity. Every part of the ancient world took ceremonials and sacraments for its faith, as an excuse for shirking the irksome responsibilities of the Religion of Action. Those who were given revealed books—Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus and the rest—mostly took refuge in ceremonialism when their respective books had disappeared or become corrupt or unintelligible. The others, commonly called Pagans, satisfied their religious passion by means of magic, charms and spells. They considered that their initiation through certain ceremonies into their cult, or by virtue of meals taken in the name and commemoration of some person who had become deified through self-immolation at the altar of the Deity, possessed a magical influence to uplift their nature and bring them nearer to God. This belief introduced the religion of Baptism and Eucharistic meals all over the ancient world. The religion of Sacraments did not originate in Christianity. It has been of the essentials of Paganism from time immemorial.

“ At the appearance of Jesus, there were temples without end, dedicated to gods like Apollo or Dionysius among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the

¹ By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement (Qur-án. xvi. 63).

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Persians, Adonis and Attis in Phrygia and Syria, Osiris and Horus in Egypt; Baal and Ishtar among the Babylonians and Carthaginians,"¹ and Quetzacoatl among the Mexicans. All these deities were sun-gods, and the story of Jesus and the faith foisted upon him by the Church as a religion of a "slain deity" repeat the same story.² I have appended a brief account of some of these sun-gods to these pages of all these mythical conceptions of sky scriptures. It was believed that :—

- (1) They were born on or near Christmas Day.
- (2) They were born of a Virgin Mother.
- (3) And in a cave or underground chamber.
- (4) They led a life of toil for mankind.
- (5) They were called by the names of Light-Bringer, Healer, Mediator, Saviour, Deliverer.
- (6) They were, however, vanquished by the powers of darkness.
- (7) They descended into Hell or the Underworld.
- (8) They rose again from the dead and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly World.
- (9) They founded Communions of Saints and Churches into which disciples were received by baptism.
- (10) They were commemorated by Eucharistic meals.

Thus it will appear that the Religion of Sacraments—Baptism and Holy Communion—is not a New Dispensation. Jesus, a true Messenger from God, who lived and tried to uplift his fellow-men and who still is loud in his message, "My God and Your God is One God," "Do not call me good, for there is none good but One, that is God"³ was raised to the pinnacle of divinity and painted in the pagan colours of a Suffering God. No wonder if these pagan colours led some of

¹ Cf. *Sources of Christianity*.

² See story of Mithraism on page 9 of *Message of Islam*.

³ John, xx. 17.

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the honest thinkers in the West to regard the "Sacred Hero of the Christian Gospel as only a mythical conception handed down from antiquity to the succeeding generations of men with a change in name and place, but retaining its pristine characteristic colours always."

The pre-Christian world of the heathens was not without its Christs, and Jesus was made a representative character of the old order—a new centre of ancient traditions, a new sanctuary, as it were, which enshrines the legends of the old.

Such teachings can in no case contribute to self-realization. If mere belief in the blood of a crucified god, unattended by good actions, as Luther says, but accompanied with Baptism and partaking of Eucharistic meals, may be taken as sufficient for human salvation, there remains no moral impulse for man towards that hard life which is essential for the working out of what is good and noble in our nature. If such beliefs and ceremonies could not uplift the pagan world—and as the traditional Christianity is only a replica of ancient things—how can it help Churchmen in the West by the mere change of name and place in the story of their faith? What a pity! That religion of the noble Nazarene that came to demolish the paganism of Europe became a miserable victim to that same paganism! The history of Christendom bears ample testimony to this. Only a few generations of Christians after the Master maintained his traditions. The true Christian spirit at first dominated their lives, but when Pauline literature inspired the builders of the Church to incorporate most of the pagan cult, with some Messianic colours as its distinctive features, into Christianity, it began to walk knee-deep in blood. Real Christian life disappeared. I am speaking of the mediæval days. The present-day Christendom is also devoid of true Christian elements.

No human instinct finds its gratification through magic, neither will a charm help the development of any faculty.

BISHOP OF PRETORIA ON OUR MESSAGE

Our belief in the efficacy of food and drink will not meet the demands of hunger and thirst. Nor will such belief contribute to physical growth. Food itself and nourishment only can secure that end. Religious instinct demands similar treatment. All cognitive passions and the faculties connected therewith work on the same principle. Religious instinct is also akin to them. It creates in us desire for Divine knowledge and for knowing things that may engender in us religious consciousness. Mere belief in this thing or that is of no avail, nor is subscription to a dogma of any use. Cognitive passions demand the assimilation of knowledge that comes through action and research. The same is true of religious passion. We must know something of God and of the ways that invite His help in the growth of our religious faculties. We must have knowledge of the faculties connected with religious instinct, and then a course to follow, that may bring religious capacity to fruition.

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